

SUZUKI PIANO BASICS FOUNDATION NEWS

Volume 3.4, July/August 1998

To facilitate, promote, and educate the public on the way of teaching and playing the piano taught at the Talent Education Research Institute in Matsumoto, Japan by Dr. Haruko Kataoka.

PIANO TONE: MUSICAL TONE, PART 3

BY DR. HARUKO KATAOKA

As I stated in the two previous articles, tone is very difficult to produce on a piano. It is difficult, but when we do enter into the world in which true, heartfelt and soulful tone exists, there is nothing as wonderful as this in our present world. It is like the Land of Happiness, and in the wonderful world of art humans can become deeply impressed with wonder(!) and happiness(!). Performances by great artists are all like this, are they not?

Because the performer is excited the music and is playing with the joy of being in the world of true tone, those feelings are conveyed directly to the audience. Then the audience members, too, may revel in the same happy feeling.

When wonderful artists play, they make natural use of the body and produce tone in a thoughtful and natural manner. It is only when a performer can do that, gives his or her entire heart, soul and spirit to the tone, that we have a great performance. The greatest and most superb artists throughout the world use their bodies naturally. We may witness this whenever we see them in person and hear their tone at the same time. Nature (God) is always beautiful.

If a person who has just graduated from music school performs, and at the same time has thoughts such as, *"I wonder if I'll make a mistake somewhere... I must be sure to play the way my teacher told me... Somehow I have to get to the end of this piece without any trouble..., etc.,"* without thinking about tone, the only things conveyed to the audience members (who may have purchased expensive tickets) will be those concerns and terrible sound. Those in the audience may conclude that classical music is boring after patiently listening to this until the end of the concert. Those who perform music must decide which human being to become and those who teach must decide which kind of human being they want to nurture.

Once again, let us consider the matter of tone on the piano. With strings and wind instruments, and with respect to the human voice, sound may not continue unless we continue to breathe or to move the bow. Those musicians can actually maintain an interest in tone throughout their bodies because of this. How about piano tone? First we produce the sound (resulting in the initial "attack" if you will), and then we must do nothing but stay on the key in order to hold the sound. We really do not do anything. But in fact, just as with other instruments, we must listen intently to our sound as it is being sung, and breathe into it with our heart of hearts. However, it seems that it is not easy to find a teacher who teaches this from the very beginning. Consequently, most pianists think only of the initial attack as the tone of the instrument. This is a mistake. From the point of the attack, musical tone rings for a long

time, gradually decreases, and dies out at the end. It is a most beautiful process when tone decreases and dies out. It is the essence of the beauty of piano tone. Please, pianists, enjoy beautiful tone.

A person who just graduated after four years at a music conservatory recently told me that only a handful of the many piano students there think about tone and play with good tone. I regret hearing that. Music is tone, but the piano is an instrument that produces tone.

HOW TO TEACH BEGINNERS, NO. 26 ECOSSAISE, BY BEETHOVEN

BY DR. HARUKO KATAOKA

This piece is very easy. We can learn to play it well in a short time. The first note in measure 1 and the first A in measure 4 are played strongly *staccato*. It is better to play all the left hand notes in measure 8 with a light *staccato* also.

When we touch the keyboard with the fifth finger in the left hand in measures 1-8, play it by carefully moving the fingertip. Play the three repeated chords in each measure very small and lightly.

Regarding the left-hand octaves in measures 9-12, make sure to play the low notes with the fifth finger by using a taking motion, moving the fingertip, without opening the hand. Make sure to keep the wrist and hand above the keys. Play the thumb notes after moving up horizontally, in a straight line. In the same way as we take with the other fingers, using the entire finger, we play the thumb by moving it sideways.

If we can play octaves in this way, we may avoid the unhappiness that occurs when octaves are attempted with an open hand, resulting in both stiff hands and stiff bodies. Being natural is most important for human beings.

When we are able to play the first two octaves (D- D, F#- F#) well with a soft hand, then play the first low note with a down and slightly heavy feeling, followed by three very light notes. [Resulting in groupings of four notes.]

The first eighth notes in measures 13 and 14 are *staccato*. Fully sing out the following quarter-note syncopations in each of these measures.

This piece may be quickly learned. Please enjoy it.

MATSUMOTO 10-PIANO VIDEOS

Videos of the November, 1997 Matsumoto 10-Piano Concert are here! Piano Basics Foundation is offering these at the same price we pay, \$100.00 per video. Postage and handling will be paid by Piano Basics Foundation.

To order please contact:

Linda Nakagawa

242 River Acres Drive, Sacramento, CA 95831

Phone/FAX: (916)422-2952, email: lgnak@quiknet.com

7-PIANO CONCERT IN ROCHESTER

BY KAREN HAGBERG, ROCHESTER, NY

Parents, teachers and the public at large often wonder why piano students would play together in unison, the same piece by many players at once. The piano is, after all, principally a solo instrument. They wonder if piano students who learn to play in unison with one another may lose some of their "creativity" or "individuality."

One reason that this question arises is that multi-piano concerts have happened only on rare occasions in all of music history. We might imagine that ensemble piano concerts may have been more commonplace were it not for the logistical problems and the sheer expense of bringing several pianos together in one place. Nobody wonders if violinists are losing their ability to express individuality when they play in an orchestra. On the contrary, good musicians on other instruments are expected to be able to play together. Part of becoming a good musician is to be taught how to play in perfect ensemble with others.

Piano is a very difficult instrument compared with those which produce only one sound at a time. It has been thought that piano, because of its complexity and difficulty, is therefore an instrument on which performers cannot be expected to be able to play in unison. We pianists can agree that our job is more complex, but despite the complexity, we believe that it is possible to produce a very beautiful and sensitive musical performance with several pianists at once. Students need only to be provided with the opportunity to do this after having been taught the same rudimentary basics of music and of piano technique.

Part of becoming a good musician is to be taught how to play in perfect ensemble with others.

There are some other very positive reasons why piano students should be involved in multi-piano performance. Learning to play the piano is a process that takes many years and which can be a very solitary endeavor. The isolation of elementary and intermediate piano students often causes them to quit out of boredom or from the frustration of being unable to enjoy their work with others. Multi-piano concerts give students the chance to play in a sort of piano orchestra." They have the opportunity to rehearse with other students and then to perform for their friends and families as part of a gala event, where the music is truly more than the sum of its parts. Each student bears his or her own responsibility for their part in the performance, and they can all be proud of the results of their hard work.

The outcome of such an event in terms of motivation for students, teachers and parents alike is immeasurable. (In Rochester, our last multi-piano concert was four years ago, and students are still talking about it!)

From a teacher's standpoint, the most important value in organizing a multi-piano concert is research. When we study how to have several students at once shape a phrase, or keep a LH accompaniment quiet, or play a crescendo, or any number of other things, we are really studying the essence of how to teach so that all students can do it. The rehearsals become a workshop for teachers and parents. All the teaching points in individual lessons become much more obvious to everyone when several students at once are trying the same thing. Students begin to realize exactly what kind of practice they need to perform their pieces successfully with total confidence and with exemplary technique. All students who participate in such concerts improve dramatically after several rehearsals and many extra hours of practice.

On April 4, the students of eleven Suzuki piano teachers in Rochester, New York staged a concert for 7 pianos. One hundred and twenty students performed thirty-one pieces from the *Twinkle Variations* to the Pieczonka *Tarantella*. There were around 1400 people in attendance.

All the teaching points in individual lessons become much more obvious to everyone when several students at once are trying the same thing.

After mixing students of several teachers whose styles of teaching are quite different in a previous concert, it was decided this time that students of smaller groups of teachers would perform together. We had four groups. This was done for two reasons. First, we hoped for more consistent results. Second, the leaders of each group were able to set their own rehearsal schedules. This was important because some of the teachers felt that they wanted much more rehearsal than others. The teachers in my group, for example, canceled regular lessons for a month before the concert and had nothing but rehearsals, while other teachers continued their regular teaching schedules and held all of their rehearsals on the weekends.

I am sure I speak for all the Rochester teachers when I say that multi-piano concerts are a wonderful experience for piano students. The videotape of our concert is available for \$35. Order from Karen Hagberg, 8 Prince Street, Rochester NY 14607.

SEIZO AZUMA IN ROCHESTER: ONE MOTHER'S EXPERIENCE

BY BECKY SUMNER, ROCHESTER, NY

On the day of the Seizo Azuma concert, my afternoon meeting ran twice as long as I expected, the children had no clean clothes and the kitchen was a mess. By 5:00 that afternoon, I really began to question whether or not we had the time, inclination or wherewithal to justify going to that evening's performance. Nevertheless, accompanied by my trinity of misgivings and trio of children (Charles age 9, Graham age 6, and Julia age 4) my husband and I headed back downtown for the concert.

If reluctant best describes our mood on the way down to Kilbourn Hall then jubilant captures the spirit of our car ride home after the concert. Not only did the children delight in seeing friends at the same concert they were attending, but they also truly reveled in the music. Our son Charles watched with rapt attention (broken only by amazed giggles) as Seizo played Rachmaninoff and Liszt--what child doesn't like pyrotechnics?

We had debated the merits of taking our younger children and are so glad we decided to make the evening a family event. Yes, our four year old did manage to fall asleep during the *Hungarian Rhapsody* and yes, Graham and Charles were both tired the next morning. But they also approached practicing with renewed enthusiasm. Particularly since the concert came on the heels of their studio recital, I think all of us gained an appreciation for the importance of a community whose values support creativity, beauty and excellence.

I have seen our children excited by many things--baseball games, new toys, a pet gecko. This was better. Their reactions to this concert reminded me that music--played and heard--is an essential experience through which children (and adults) learn to speak, to listen and to grow.

Becky Sumner's children are students of Lisa Cash.

1999 MATSUMOTO 10-PIANO CONCERT

MAY 2, 1999

AND

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL PIANO BASICS 10-PIANO CONCERT SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA AUGUST 6, 1999

All teachers, new to Piano Basics or experienced, are invited to attend these concerts. The Sacramento workshop will be followed by a five-day teacher workshop with Dr. Kataoka. Teachers wishing to have students perform in either of these events should consult the guidelines in our May/June issue.

LETTERS, LETTERS, LETTERS

10 PIANO CONCERT VIDEO: A STUDENT'S RESPONSE

FROM JOAN KRZYWICKI, PHILADELPHIA, PA

To Piano Basics Foundation,

Last week when the video of the Matsumoto 10-piano Concert arrived, one of my students (Catherine Griffin) who had been there was so excited that her mother Pam wrote me a letter. The following statements are her exact quotes:

"Last night, after her tape arrived from the Japan concert, we laid on my bed for two hours as she played and replayed all the pieces showing me one ending which was '*awesome*' or a section where the left hand was '*impossible*', etc. She couldn't watch and listen long enough.

Her joy was the kind I would normally associate teenagers as having over boys or clothes and here it was over classical music. Never in my wildest imagination did I think, when we came to you for piano lessons, that music would penetrate her very soul."

FROM WARNER BROTHERS PUBLICATIONS:

We are pleased to inform you that Volumes 5 and 6 of our *Suzuki Piano School* are currently available in their newly re-engraved format. As with Volume 7, the note size is larger and much more readable.

You should be able to find them at your local music store. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. Thank you for your interest in our music.

Sincerely,
Judi Gowe, Editor
Music Education/Suzuki Method

FROM A NEW MEMBER

To Whom It May Concern:

I was delighted to discover your web-site and the existence of the organization. I think your work is very important and feel very strongly that Talent Education, as it is practiced in Matsumoto, is not well enough known by those who are supposed to be teaching and studying music with the "Suzuki Method."

The articles by Dr. Kataoka are particularly valuable. I would agree with those who insist that her ideas need to be known by all piano teachers and students who use the Suzuki Method approach.

I had my first Suzuki Method training with Carol Sykes, in the 1960's, at the New England Conservatory of Music. She had just returned from a year of teacher training with Dr. Suzuki in Matsumoto, when she began training teachers in the conservatory setting I was able to work with Dr. Suzuki at that time on one of his visits to the States.

Thirty years ago, I began my Suzuki Method teaching career when I became the first Suzuki Method teacher/faculty member in The New England Conservatory's Preparatory Department. Through the years I have turned to some wonderful and generous teachers for guidance, including Cathy Williams-Hargrave, Bruce Anderson, and Rhonda Harrison Shimano.

...I am very supportive of Piano Basics Foundation's goals. I very much value the opportunity to establish and maintain a connection with the Foundation. It is one of the few organizations that recognizes the importance of acquiring and maintaining a meaningful understanding of the Talent Education Approach as it is defined and practiced in Matsumoto.

Richard Coff, Director
Suzuki Music Academy

1998 PIANO BASICS WORKSHOP SCHEDULE DR. HARUKO KATAOKA

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK AUGUST 9-13

Dr. Karen Hagberg, Director

8 Prince Street, Rochester, NY 14607

PHONE: (716) 244-0490 FAX: (716) 244-3542 EMAIL: Hagberg-Drake@juno.com

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA AUGUST 16-20

Linda Nakagawa, Director

242 River Acres Drive, Sacramento, CA 95831

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REGISTRATIONS ARE STILL BEING ACCEPTED!

**TO RECEIVE TUITION REBATES, CONSULT THE MAY-JUNE ISSUE OF THIS
NEWSLETTER**

PIANO BASICS FOUNDATION WEBSITE

suzuki.htm

If you haven't visited our website, take a moment to check it out! The 1996 issues of *Piano Basics Foundation News* are currently on-line. 1997 issues will be added this summer. There are also several links that will be of special interest to Piano Basics members: Memorials to Dr. Suzuki, History of the Suzuki Method, Kawai America, Most Commonly Asked Questions About Piano, The Music Yellow Pages, The Piano Page, maintained by the Piano Technicians Guild (also includes music resources, classical musical sites, music software, etc.) Steinway & Sons, Suzuki Association of the Americas, and Yamaha Pianos.

Dr. Kenneth Wilburn, web editor and history professor at East Carolina University where our web site is archived, is the Suzuki Dad of Shelly, a Book 4 student in the piano studio of Gretchen Smith of Greenville, North Carolina.

CORRECTION: In the May/June issue a "w" was omitted from our web-site address. We apologize for any inconvenience. The correct address is suzuki.htm

PIANO BASICS FOUNDATION CATALOG OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

DISCOGRAPHY -- SUZUKI PIANO REPERTOIRE

Prices good through December 1998

ID/Composer	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL	CAT#	Member	Non-member
VOLUME 1	H. Kataoka	Volume 1	PBF	5005	14.00	17.00
VOLUME 2	H. Kataoka	Volume 2	PBF	5007	14.00	17.00
VOLUME 3	H. Kataoka	Volume 3	PBF	5009	14.00	17.00
	H. Kataoka	Complete Set	PBF	5011	36.00	51.00

VOLUME 4:

Mozart	W. Gieseking	Minuet I, III, VIII K. 315a	CAP	63688	85.00	95.00
Beethoven	W. Gieseking	Sonata, Op.49, No.2	PHS	9930	17.00	20.00
	Emil Gilels	Sonata, Op.49, No.2	PLC	19172	16.00	20.00
Bach	Dinu Lipatti	Minuet I & II Gigue (BWV 825)	CAP	69800	10.00	13.00

VOLUME 5:

Beethoven	V. Ashkenazy	Fur Elise (Bagatelle)	PLC	17751	10.00	13.00
J.S. Bach	Glenn Gould	Prelude in C (Well-Tempered Clavier Book 1)	COL	52600	31.00	34.00
	Andras Schiff	as above	PLC	14388	30.00	33.00
J.S. Bach	Glenn Gould	Inventions 2&3 Part	COL	52596	15.00	18.00
Haydn	Andras Schiff	as above	PLC	11974	15.00	18.00
	Ingrid Haebler	Sonata in C. Hob. XVI, No. 35,	PLC	42659	10.00	13.00
		No Longer Available				

VOLUME 6:

J.S. Bach	Andras Segovia, Little Prelude guitar (Preludes for Lute, BWV 999)	CAP	61048	10.00	13.00
Mozart	W. Giesecking Sonata K.545	CAP	63688	85.00	95.00
	A. de Larrocha Sonata K.545 (with K.281, 282, 284)	RCAV	60709	15.00	17.00
Daquin	S. Rachmaninoff The Cuckoo (The Complete Recordings of S. Rachmaninoff)	RCA	61265	107.00	125.00
Mozart	W. Giesecking Sonata K.330	CAP	63688	85.00	95.00
	A. de Larrocha Sonata K.330 (with K.309, 310, and 311)	RCAV	60454	15.00	18.00
Scarlatti	Dinu Lipatti Sonata "Pastoral" L.413	CAP	69800	10.00	13.00

VOLUME 7:

Mozart	W. Giesecking Sonata K.331	CAP	63688	85.00	95.00
	A. de Larrocha Sonata K.331 (with K.253, 332, and 333)	RCAV	60407	15.00	17.00
Handel	S. Rachmaninoff Harmonious Blacksmith	RCA	61265	107.00	125.00
	(The Complete Recordings of S. Rachmaninoff)				
Paderewski	Paderewski Minuet (No Longer Available)	RCAV	60923	10.00	13.00

ADDITIONAL DISCOGRAPHY

	A. de Larrocha Spanish Fireworks/- Piano Collection	PLC	17795	10.00	13.00
	A. de Larrocha Spanish Serenade	RCAV	61389	14.00	17.00
	A. de Larrocha Spanish Encores Impresiones...	PLC	17639	15.00	18.00
	V. Horowitz Private collection	RCAV	62643	14.00	17.00
	V. Horowitz Complete RCA Recordings	RCAV	61655	212.00	240.00
J.S. Bach	Glenn Gould Italian Concerto/- Partita/Toccata	COL	42527	7.00	10.00
Beethoven	F. Gulda Piano Sonatas 14/15/17/21/23/24	PLC	43012	15.00	18.00
	V. Ashkenazy Piano Sonatas 1-32 Complete (No Longer Available)	PLC	25590	94.00	105.00
Beethoven/-	S. Azuma Piano Sonata 8/26	EPS	005	15.00	18.00
Chopin	A. de Larrocha Preludes-Complete	PLC	33089	7.00	10.00
Clementi	V. Horowitz Horowitz Plays Clementi	RCAV	7753	10.00	13.00
Liszt	M. Nojima Nojima Plays Liszt	REF	25	15.00	18.00
Mozart	A. de Larrocha Fantasy 397 (with K. 279,280)	RCAV	60453	15.00	18.00
M. Ravel	M. Nojima Nojima Plays Ravel	REF	35	15.00	18.00

VIDEOTAPES

Matsumoto	1996-10 Piano Concert	PBF	5007	80.00
Seizo Azuma	Solo Piano Recital	EPS	107	50.00

June 28, 1995
Matsumoto Fall 1997-10 Piano Concert PBF 5008 100.00 120.00

BOOKS

Author	Title			
H. Kataoka	<i>Sensibility and Education</i>	7.00	10.00	
S. Suzuki	<i>Nurtured by Love</i>	12.00	15.00	
H. Kataoka	<i>Thoughts on the Suzuki Piano School</i>	5.00	7.00	
H. Kataoka	<i>My Thoughts on Piano Technique</i>	5.00	7.00	
H. Kataoka	<i>How to Teach Beginners</i>	10.00	12.00	

To order, call or FAX Piano Basics Foundation at: 916-422-2952.

Sorry, we do not accept credit cards.

NEW!

PIANO BASICS FOUNDATION
242 River Acres Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95831
Phone/FAX 916-422-2952

Piano Basics Foundation has recently been organized to support the method of teaching and playing the piano taught at the Talent Education Research Institute in Matsumoto, Japan by Dr. Haruko Kataoka. Piano Basics Foundation will provide its members with recordings, books and videotapes with free postage and handling.

Above is a listing of books, videotapes and recordings (instructional materials). If you are looking for a particular recording, FAX us a note with the composer's name, instrument, name of the piece and the name of the artist. We will let you know if it is available or not.

NEW! SUZUKI METHOD 10-PIANO CONCERT VIDEO TAPE

**November 30, 1997
Harmony Hall, Matsumoto**

The Suzuki Method 10 - Piano Concert has grown to include 250 students

Pieces performed include the *Twinkles* and much of the repertoire throughout the books, de Falla *Ritual Fire Dance* and Chopin *Etude in C Minor*, Op. 10-12 *Revolution*

ORDER NOW! PBF 5008: Member Price \$100.00, Non-member Price \$120.00

Mail your orders in dollars via check or money order to Piano Basics Foundation, 242 River Acres Drive, Sacramento, CA 95831 USA. Please include your name, address, telephone number, the item/s, label and catalog number, artist/composer, title, and total your order. Designate

whether you are a Piano Basics member (free shipping); otherwise 1-5 items add \$7.50, 6-10 items add \$15.00, and 11-15 items add \$22.50, etc. California residents must add 7.75% tax.

Please send corrections to [Kenneth Wilburn](#), web editor for **Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation News**.

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